



# FactSheet

September 2009

## I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project Providing safe, reliable energy for the future

The July 2009 heat wave brought unusual attention to the region’s electric power system. Daily media alerts in the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area questioned whether the power system could generate and deliver sufficient power to keep air conditioning units running, and whether the system could hold up under stresses caused by the heat and demand for power.

The transmission system successfully met all the challenges the heat threw at it, as it did last winter when snow and freezing temperatures gripped the region for days.

Growing population and energy uses such as air conditioning drive increasing electricity demand in the Portland/Vancouver area and throughout the Northwest, even with an aggressive regional energy conservation program. As the demand for electricity increases, BPA’s transmission system will continue to be tested.

As part of its effort to keep pace with increasing demands, BPA is proposing to build the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project, a new 500-kilovolt transmission line that would run between Castle Rock, Wash., and Troutdale, Ore.

### Why is the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project needed?

The proposed project would strengthen BPA’s transmission grid and allow it to meet future electricity demands safely and reliably.

The transmission system in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon is heavily used and is approaching its capacity as power production and electricity use increase. More and more electricity is needed for the high concentration of industrial, commercial and residential electrical use in Portland, Vancouver, Longview and surrounding suburban cities and towns. The power plants that serve this area include hydroelectric dams; gas, coal and nuclear plants; and, more recently, wind farms. These power generation facilities use the transmission system to get the power they produce to the people and industries that use it.

BPA continues to receive requests for more transmission service. Each year, utilities, power generators and power marketers make requests for long-term transmission service on BPA’s transmission system. These requests further increase the likelihood that the transmission system will soon exceed its capacity. BPA has taken all available steps to reduce congestion on the system short of major infrastructure additions, but the problem continues to intensify.

If an additional line is not built, these pressures pose serious reliability concerns and possibly could lead to







power blackouts in the area. This conclusion is supported by other regional utilities that have also experienced increasing demands on their systems.

Reinforcing the transmission system along the I-5 corridor also would provide the transmission flexibility required to bring more highly desirable renewable wind power from the east to the population centers along I-5.

### How does BPA propose to reinforce the system?

BPA planning engineers have determined that adding a 500-kV transmission line would help meet the region’s growing need for electricity. The proposed transmission line would be about 70 miles long and extend from a new substation near Castle Rock, Wash., to a new substation near BPA’s existing Troutdale Substation.

BPA has not identified a preferred route or made a decision to build a line. Engineers have identified a number of route segments (see map on opposite page) between the proposed new substations. The segments vary in length and include both existing and new rights-of-way. Some segments run parallel to existing rights-of-way. Route segments cross urban and rural, private and public land. Any number of identified route segments can be combined to form a reasonable transmission line alternative. There may be other segments that meet the technical requirements of the system that we haven’t looked at yet. If there are, we want to hear about them.

### What are the next steps?

BPA will prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed project. The first step is seeking comments on the scope of the EIS to help identify

potentially significant impacts and issues that may result from the proposed project. Information and comments from all interested and potentially affected parties, including landowners, citizens, tribes, government agencies and interest groups, will help us identify potential environmental impacts.

The potential environmental issues identified for most transmission line projects include land use, cultural resources, aesthetics, public health and safety, sensitive plants and animals, soil erosion, wetlands, floodplains, fish, wildlife and water resources.

Once the scoping period ends, the agency will use the comments received during the scoping period, discussions with interested parties and additional surveys and studies of the route segments to develop reasonable transmission line alternatives and to begin work on the draft EIS.

This draft EIS will describe the transmission line alternatives developed and identify potential impacts and mitigation to reduce impacts. The draft EIS also will

**Fall 2009**  
 BPA announces proposed project and solicits public input on scope of EIS

**2010**  
 BPA conducts field work and environmental analyses, prepares draft environmental impact statement

**Spring 2011**  
 BPA issues draft environmental impact statement for public review and comment

**Spring 2012**  
 BPA issues final environmental impact statement

**Spring 2012**  
 BPA announces agency decision

describe the impacts of not building the transmission line. When complete, BPA will release the draft EIS for public review and comment, and will hold public meetings. BPA will respond to comments on the draft EIS in the final EIS.

After BPA reviews all the information in the final EIS, it will make a decision about the project, which will be explained in a record of decision.

### How can I get involved?

There are several ways to be informed and to get involved in the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project:

#### Get on the mailing list

If you received this in the mail, you are on our mailing list. If you would like to be added to the list, please visit the project Web site at [www.bpa.gov/go/i5](http://www.bpa.gov/go/i5) and view the “Get Involved” link. You also can call us toll free at (800) 230-6593 and leave your name, address and other contact information so we can add you to the list.

#### Go online

Visit the project Web site at [www.bpa.gov/go/i5](http://www.bpa.gov/go/i5). The Web site has a wealth of information about the project. The Web site will be updated throughout the public and environmental review.

#### Submit comments on the project

You may submit comments, suggestions or requests to BPA in a number of ways. Online at [www.bpa.gov/go/i5](http://www.bpa.gov/go/i5). By mail at BPA I-5 Corridor Reinforcement, PO Box 9250, Portland OR 97207. Toll free at (800) 230-6593. By fax at (888) 315-4503.

BPA is accepting public scoping comments through Nov. 23, 2009. BPA posts all comments on its Web site. Comments received by voice mail at the toll-free number will be transcribed and posted on the Web site.

#### Attend the open house scoping meetings

At these informal meetings, BPA will provide maps and other information about the project and have members of the project team available to answer questions and accept oral and written comments. Interested parties may stop by any time during the open house to share ideas and comments.

### Open house scoping meetings

- Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2009**  
 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Amboy Middle School  
 22115 NE Chelatchie Road  
 Amboy, WA 98601
- Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2009**  
 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Gaiser Student Hall at Clark College  
 1933 Fort Vancouver Way  
 Vancouver, WA 98663
- Thursday, Oct. 29, 2009**  
 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Mark Morris High School  
 1602 Mark Morris Court  
 Longview, WA 98632
- Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2009**  
 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Liberty Middle School  
 1612 NE Garfield Street  
 Camas, WA 98607
- Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009**  
 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Gresham Holiday Inn  
 2752 NE Hogan Drive  
 Gresham, OR 97030
- Saturday, Nov. 7, 2009**  
 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.  
 Hazel Dell Grange  
 7509 NE Hazel Dell Avenue  
 Vancouver, WA 98665  
 No wheelchair access at this meeting
- For Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, please call toll free (800) 622-4519.*

